

September 19, 1958

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Dear Bernie:

Thank you for your note of September 8. I've now been back long enough that I realize that I can put off no longer coming to grips with setting a time for the Mueller lecture. I hope you don't feel that my procrastination about this is in any way a sign of diffidence about it. I am really honored by your having asked me to do this, and it only that I have been so harassed by other accumulations that I haven't known where to begin. In any case I might as well tell you that this is the only engagement of the kind that I have been rash enough to accept for the coming year in view of what I hope is a never repeated schedule.

As far as my own convenience goes I think I really would prefer to come at a moderately early date and I would tentatively suggest October 30. I note your comment about Monod's previous lectures but, on the one hand, you're going to get a constant stream through of speakers in any case at all times of the year and I actually do not think there would be a tremendous overlap in the content of our material.

I would like to postpone the choice of announced topics until the last possible moment, and please advise me when this would be. A secondary reason for my delay has been the puzzle of what I should really talk about, since I have almost nothing to say that is fundamentally new over the past year or two and it is rather tiresome to simply bring up the occasion novelties in details of recent work. I suspect that by now the bulk of your audience will know the major lines of anything I might think to talk about. The choices I am mulling over at the moment are, on the one hand, a review bringing up to date various features of bacterial recombination. Alternatively I have some thoughts on the question of the genetic basis of antibody formation and other topics in differentiation, but this would make a rather speculative and not very meaty presentation. I would wonder how the latter would suit a lectureship in the Mueller tradition.

I do hope to have a pleasant interlude during my visit and hope it will seem so, at least as of the actual time I am underway.

Esther is thinking over your gracious proposal of her coming along and we will let you know in good time. Thank you very much for your persistence on this matter and I want to say that it is really very much appreciated.

Yours as ever,